CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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on Thursday, 23 May 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Serguei B. Batsanov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 592nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I have to begin this meeting on a sad note. I am sure that all of us were shocked by the tragic news of the assassination of the former Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Rajiv Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi was an outstanding political figure whose importance was felt not only in his great country but also throughout world politics. His contribution to disarmament is well known. He advanced comprehensive far-reaching proposals both on his own behalf and in his capacity as a member of the group of heads of State and government known as the Six-Nation Initiative. The demise of a statesman of his calibre represents an irreparable loss for India as well as for the international community as a whole. As the representative of the Soviet Union, I should like to stress that the Soviet people were well acquainted with Rajiv Gandhi and highly appreciated him as a major contemporary statesman and political leader, who continued the great national cause of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and made an unfading contribution to Indian-Soviet friendship. Distinguished delegates, I would like to ask you all to rise and observe a minute of silence.

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On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf I would like to ask the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Chadha, to convey to his Government and to the family of the deceased our sympathy and deeply felt condolences at this difficult time.

Before we turn to our usual programme of work, I should like to ask whether any of the distinguished delegates would like to take the floor at this juncture. In that case, I wish to inform you of our programme of work for today. First of all, I would like to say that the consultations on the dates for the next session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events have been successfully concluded. Therefore, after the list of speakers is exhausted, I intend to put before the Conference for adoption the recommendation contained in paragraph 15 of the progress report on the thirty-first session of the Ad Hoc Group, as contained in document CD/1065.

I have on my list of speakers for today the distinguished representatives of the Netherlands and Peru. Moreover, I would also like to make a brief statement on behalf of the delegation of the Soviet Union. Now I call on the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): On behalf of the Netherlands delegation, I would like to join the President's expression of sadness and sorrow on the assassination of the former Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Rajiv Gandhi. The untimely death of this great leader and statesman is a tremendous loss not only for India but for the world community as a whole. We in the Netherlands considered Rajiv Gandhi a great friend. I am sure that Ambassador Chadha will transmit our condolences and feelings of solidarity to his Government and to the family of the deceased.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Netherlands delegation on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that under your inspiring leadership our expectations of considerable progress will be fulfilled. Indeed, we do aspire that in your concurrent capacity as Chairman of the 1991 Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, you will achieve the long-desired CW convention. Do it, Mr. President. You can be sure of the full support of my delegation.

Today I wish to address three subjects: first, the chemical weapons convention in statu nascendi; second, a nuclear test ban, notably its scope and verification; and third, "track B" of the radiological weapons file, on the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities. Lastly, I should like to introduce document CD/1064, which contains the text of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed in Paris on 19 November 1990.

We are extremely happy that the United States of America last week reconsidered its position on a number of delicate issues concerning the draft chemical weapons convention: the issues of security stocks and the use of chemical weapons in retaliation or otherwise. We know that the American decisions were difficult to take, and we are therefore all the more satisfied and grateful that they were taken. I trust them to provide an important political impulse to engage us in the final phase of the negotiations.

It is indeed now high time for all delegations present here to get our act together. Let us establish a realistic deadline and let us start a major effort within the Conference on Disarmament, in conjunction with interested observers, to finalize the convention before the deadline expires. We must reorganize ourselves somewhat to be able to tackle the major remaining issues. And in order not to lose precious time, it will be necessary to continue our negotiations during the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly. Two major problem areas require much further consideration. These are challenge inspections and the verification of non-production in the chemical industry. Of course, much other nitty-gritty work still needs to be done, but right now it seems important to concentrate on solving the two major verification problems. These are complex matters which are vital to an effective treaty and which touch upon important national security and industrial interests. These will therefore take time to solve. Some other difficult issues, such as the composition of the Executive Council, may be tackled somewhat later.

For handling the major question of verification of non-production in the chemical industry, excellent work has been done in Working Group B. This work should be continued as a matter of high priority. Indeed, a régime is coming into being which has good deterrence features with respect to potential violators of the convention and is at the same time cost-effective. Openness of the chemical industry will create the confidence that all parties are faithfully complying with the treaty.

No formal structure exists as yet to tackle the other major issue - i.e. challenge inspections. For the time being we could leave it to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to organize private and open-ended consultations. Somewhat later in the year we may need a more organized

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structure to handle this complex matter. Many ideas are floating around, while trial challenge inspections have been carried out and are being organized in order to study particular aspects of such inspections and build up experience. We now reach a stage in which concrete and tested ideas are brought into the discussions which must be translated into treaty language. The time is ripe for a major effort in this field.

Most other matters, the nitty-gritty of the convention, could be handled in the existing working groups. However, clear priorities will have to be established. The extended bureau could play a more active role in steering the work that takes place in the different forums.

At this point in time, it does not seem useful to dwell extensively on the various remaining problems. One particular aspect I would like to mention, however, is the question of amendments. Last year we agreed on two types of amendment procedure, a heavy one and a so-called simplified one. The qualification "simplified" is wrong because it gives a wrong impression: the procedure is not simple at all. For any proposed change under this procedure, one or more qualified majorities must be found among States parties, first in the Executive Council and subsequently, if the decision is still contested, in the Conference of all States parties. Since the procedure is quite difficult, we must not be afraid to submit all the annexes of the convention to this procedure. In the main treaty we already have, or we still shall, put all the major obligations which virtually cannot be changed under the "heavy" amendment procedure. The annexes contain the details which could then be changed if really needed, taking into account relevant experience on the part of the Technical Secretariat and the States parties as well as new technological developments. This would be a logical structure for the convention. By adopting an early decision on this matter, all working groups would then also have guidance how to structure the articles of the convention and their annexes.

Finally, we need not be afraid to leave certain details to the Preparatory Commission and the Technical Secretariat to be worked out under the guidance of the Executive Council. There has been a tendency in the past to stipulate all future procedures in detail. This is not our task: our present task is to work out a treaty in which we all have confidence and which includes all major obligations in detail sufficient for us not to find ourselves confronted with unpleasant surprises once the treaty enters into force. Consequently, parts of the "rolling text" can be transferred to the PrepCom for further consideration and we need not devote too much attention to them any more. The extended bureau could also develop proposals on these matters for submission to the Ad Hoc Committee.

I realize that on the chemical weapons convention I have been raising mainly procedural matters, and in doing so, I omitted an organizational decision which is, as you can understand, somewhat dear to us, i.e. on the establishment of the CW treaty organization. I will not dwell on that now. Let me simply stress that these procedural matters are relevant, if we are to get our job done before the summer session of 1992, before our well-earned annual holiday: that should be the ultimate deadline.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

We have, during this year's CD winter session, witnessed an intensive debate in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. The Netherlands welcomes the resumption of the Committee's work and the active participation of many CD members in that debate. There are many subjects which have to be studied in depth in order to increase the understanding of the problems involved. During this spring session of the Conference on Disarmament, the Committee will focus its attention amongst others on the scope of an eventual test ban as well as on verification issues in relation to such a ban.

Indeed, the single issue of the scope of a test ban is not as simple as it appears to be. It involves the problem of defining what a nuclear test is. The definition of a nuclear test could, for example, take the yield of an explosion as one of its main focal points. When the yield goes down, other factors must, increasingly, also be taken into consideration. Modern technology has increased the range of applications where atoms are split or fused. For example, certain technologies to harness fusion power for energy production use very small contained nuclear explosions. Thus, it is one of the matters we have to study carefully. What also should be avoided, in a future test ban, is a prohibition of nuclear tests which leaves open the option of peaceful nuclear explosions. So-called peaceful nuclear explosions can easily be misused for nuclear weapon tests. On the other hand, a test ban should not become an impediment to peaceful nuclear research or nuclear cooperation. Hence my observation that at very low yields, one will have to look at other factors if we want to determine the parameters for a nuclear test ban.

The verification of a test ban is another tricky issue. A test ban should be a comprehensive one, i.e. a prohibition of nuclear tests as has already been established in the partial test-ban Treaty and a prohibition of underground testing. It is clear that seismic methods alone are not sufficient for the verification of such a comprehensive ban. We will also have to look at subjects like monitoring of radioactivity in the atmosphere and satellite observation, notably for the verification of a test ban above ground or water. There might have to be substantial reliance on national technical means owned by a small number of States.

In my own country we had a brief look at the way the monitoring of atmospheric radioactivity is done. In the Netherlands we have modern networks geared towards monitoring nuclear accidents and other nuclear fall-out. These systems are not very well suited to finding a single atmospheric test. However, we have a rather sensitive high-volume air sampling station which could identify any debris of a nuclear explosion in the atmosphere. Few such stations exist, however, in the world, and most are to be found in the northern hemisphere. Standardization of stations is also a considerable problem. For the verification of the prohibition of nuclear tests under water, we will have to look at other measures, like the application of hydro-acoustic technologies.

Up to now the Conference on Disarmament has made considerable efforts to study ways and means of seismic verification of a prohibition of underground nuclear explosions. Yes, considerable progress has been made, but a lot remains to be done. A preliminary conclusion is that on the basis of

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presently existing worldwide seismic capacities, it should be possible to identify underground explosions down to a yield of 10 to 15 kilotons. However, the costs of a worldwide seismic system will rise sharply if yields lower than 10 kilotons are to be identified. On the basis of present technology it seems not feasible to establish a seismic network which could identify all underground nuclear explosions.

Somewhere a line will have to be drawn, when we try to find our way through the Bermuda Triangle of what is politically desirable, technically feasible and financially viable. A considerable amount of further study in the Ad Hoc Committee is therefore necessary. The Netherlands will contribute actively to this debate and will introduce a paper on aspects of verification of a test ban later this year.

The issue of the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities has been a subject within the CD for a number of years. The maximum one can say is that there appears to be deadlock within the "track B" group of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons. The main issue where CD members have found themselves in a stalemate in "track B" concerns the scope of an eventual prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities. The Netherlands' first and foremost goal has been that mass destruction, as a result of the release of massive quantities of radioactive substances, must be prevented. For the sake of clarity, therefore, it seemed logical to try to select and identify nuclear installations whose destruction or damage as the result of an attack could lead to the release of massive quantities of radiation. Attacks on those installations were to be formally prohibited in a treaty. That was the rationale for the Netherlands' support of option 1 of scope: that is, a prohibition of attack on certain nuclear facilities.

However, it became clear over the years that no consensus was possible in the CD on the basis of such an approach. Some States were aiming at blanket protection of all their nuclear installations, regardless of the aspect of possible mass destruction. That option raised major opposition from other States which feared that such a sweeping approach could create some sanctuaries which, they felt, were inappropriate in wartime. Some other States considered the potential for mass destruction to be the exclusive criterion. Whereas, in the first option, this criterion also existed and led to the notion of prohibition of attacks on certain nuclear facilities, a different approach emerged. I am thinking especially of the possibility that the principal issue does not concern the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities itself, but whether damage as a result of an attack on a nuclear installation leads to the release of massive quantities of radioactive substances and thus, potentially, to mass destruction. States should have the obligation to prevent the massive release of radioactive substances leading to mass destruction.

The Netherlands has looked at these options again. It is clear, especially in the light of recent developments, that it is extremely difficult to protect certain sites, notably in conditions of war. This issue was also raised some years ago by the distinguished representative of the Federal Republic of Germany when he pointed to the problems involved with perimeters

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around nuclear installations to be protected. It is not only a matter of the risk of abuse of such protected zones, but also that it is difficult to envisage credibly that installations which might well have a crucial impact on the war-fighting capability of a State could be spared from attack through protection by a treaty.

As a general rule the Netherlands believes that in a war-fighting scenario collateral damage and suffering by civilians should be avoided to the maximum possible extent. The issue, therefore, when looking at the options under consideration in the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, is to find some common ground between the proviso not to create undue advantages and the necessity to avoid mass destruction. The Netherlands has come to the conclusion that when dealing with the issue of a prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities, the emphasis should be on the prevention of mass destruction under any circumstances through the release and dissemination of radioactive substances. This is what should be forbidden in a treaty. Such an approach would also be in line with our policy to strengthen, wherever possible, the humanitarian laws of war. In this connection we regret that so few States have ratified the relevant Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention. More groundwork needs to be done. Perhaps in the future interested CD delegations could look at this aspect when consulting each other on the issue of possible elements relevant to the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities as well as procedural ways and means to advance this cause. Possibly it could be raised at the forthcoming International Red Cross Conference in Budapest in the autumn of this year.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), signed at the 1990 Paris summit, is an arms control agreement of truly historic significance for European security. The fact that 22 countries have succeeded in agreeing on reducing conventional weapons to considerably lower and equal levels on both sides is evidence of realism, goodwill and mutual trust. The reduction in conventional forces and the far-reaching verification régime provided for in the Treaty reflect the desire on the part of the 22 contracting parties for a significantly greater degree of political and military stability and cooperation in Europe. The success of the negotiations in Vienna in agreeing on methods of bringing about the destruction of tens of thousands of weapons within a reasonable period of time surely means that a genuine change has taken place in the world. By implementing the Treaty, Europe will be transformed into a monitored security zone with an unprecedented degree of transparency in military affairs, thus increasing predictability and mutual confidence. To quote from the CFE preamble, it remains as important as ever to strive arduously to "replace military confrontation with a new pattern of security relations ... based on peaceful cooperation". A key role in determining how fully we achieve that objective will be played by the manner in which the States parties approach the question of implementation of the Treaty. Timely resolution of the serious data problems that hamper the ratification process will be essential. As depositary State of the historic Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), it gives my delegation great pleasure to introduce document CD/1064.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me and his good wishes. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Peru, Dr. Calderón.

Mr. CALDERON (Peru) (translated from Spanish): First of all allow me to convey to the representative of India, Ambassador Chadha, the very heartfelt condolences of my country on the demise of the great statesman Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Through you, I would ask him to convey to his Government and his people our sincerest condolences and our solidarity with that noble country which is demonstrating its greatness in this time of trial.

As I am taking the floor for the first time in plenary under your presidency, Sir, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the skilful way in which you have been performing your responsible functions - congratulations which also extend to your wise leadership of the Ad Hoc Committee entrusted with the task of negotiating the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. Secondly, I would like to bid a cordial farewell from my delegation to the distinguished ambassadors Loeis of Indonesia and U Aung Thant of Myanmar, and at the same time to welcome very warmly the new representative of the latter country, Ambassador U Tin Kyaw Hlaing, whom we wish every success.

My delegation listened with great satisfaction to the interesting proposals put forward last Thursday, 16 May, on behalf of his country, by Ambassador Stephen Ledogar. With a commendable step that does it credit, the United States has corrected its position on two issues of the greatest importance, with the result that the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons have now gained renewed impetus, to the extent that this time it seems reasonable to believe that the convention on the total prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons can be finalized next year. This change in the position of the United States has occurred at the very moment when the international community has become deeply aware that chemical weapons are of little or no military use in guaranteeing the security of the States that possess them. We applaud this long-awaited gesture by the United States and all that remains ahead of us is to use the same intelligence and urgency to deal with the still outstanding issues. We agree with the United States delegation that there is no longer any place for "business as usual".

My delegation considers that the United States has taken a very positive step by dropping its insistence on the "right to retaliation". This new position, which goes far beyond its obligations with regard to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, offers the advantage, in my view, of excluding "second use" for whatever reason and against any State whatsoever as soon as the Convention comes into effect. And should there be any doubt remaining, it is also proposed to ban the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances.

We also welcome the unconditional commitment made by the United States to abide by the time-limit of 10 years for the destruction of all chemical weapon stocks possessed by the States parties, as well as the facilities for the production of these weapons of mass destruction. The abandonment of the contentious position of maintaining 2 per cent as a safety valve in order

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to guarantee the universality of the convention could not have been more appropriate, and to do so unconditionally could not have been more significant. My delegation also shares the view that intrinsic benefits should be built into the convention in order to encourage the widest possible accession by States. We are also in favour of including sufficient restrictions and obstacles for those who, after a reasonable period, choose to remain outside the convention. For the same reasons the proposal made to us by the United States for cooperation with the States parties in the destruction of their chemical weapon stocks is highly thought-provoking. This initiative is particularly interesting when applied to the case of States parties that have chemical weapons which were abandoned on their territory.

The distinguished representative of the United States also made a proposal of a procedural nature. In concrete terms, the Ad Hoc Committee would be authorized to remain in continuous session over the next 12 months until negotiations are concluded. In view of the fact that my delegation has always demanded that negotiations be speeded up we very warmly welcome this proposal, on the understanding, of course, that there would be certain breaks to permit consultations with our capitals. We fully support the 12-month work schedule together with the increased effort that will have to be made until the end of this year in order to have the convention practically ready. And in order to clear up any doubts, perhaps it would be advisable to amend the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee to ensure that it reflects the new atmosphere prevailing in the Conference. It is this convergence of opinions on procedural matters that prompts me to contemplate the possibility of examining to what extent it would be desirable to keep the same bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee, under your chairmanship, Ambassador Batsanov, until the negotiations are concluded. The need to preserve proper consistency during the final stages of the negotiations could be one of the reasons; but we could also argue the need to keep the same structure in the organization of the Committee's work. In any event, my delegation is perfectly aware of the fact that this is a matter which requires consensus among the regional groups and, above all, the consent of the group that would be expected to nominate a candidate for the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1992.

On the instructions of my Government I am very pleased to inform this Conference this morning that the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is already taking steps leading in due course to the establishment of a national authority under article VII of the future convention. A multisectoral committee will carry out the preparatory work for this purpose. The Peruvian Government is aware of the great importance for mankind of the convention on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, and therefore wishes through me to state its intention as of now to become an original signatory of the convention.

In the field of arms regulation and disarmament, verification is an effective mechanism for confidence-building and a guarantee to safeguard existing levels of security. Verification is not a philosophical or moral exercise. Above all it serves to confirm eminently technical facts on the basis of observation, supported as the case may be by the use of high-precision instruments. For this reason verification, like any other human endeavour is not and cannot be 100 per cent exact or certain.

(Mr. Calderón, Peru)

And actually it does not need to be. It is the product of what might be called "political engineering", a half abstract and half exact science which we diplomats seem to practise compulsively, and which makes it possible to say how far one has to move if one really wants to attain one's objective. In each case there is a ruling principle which will ensure the best possible result through an equation in which political good will, together with the technical and juridical resources available, are applied in the light of the "opportunity cost", that basic principle of economic reasoning which, applied to the current negotiations, will demonstrate that there is a lower cost and a greater benefit if we succeed in identifying the right moment at which the convention should be concluded, thus preventing us from choosing the wrong moment when the marginal cost would in all respects be greater than the benefit obtained.

The convention that we have been negotiating for several years now includes in its present form the outline of a revolutionary system of verification. It is not for nothing that provisions related or linked to verification take up more than 70 per cent of the whole. And this is to be expected. However, there is still a considerable amount of work ahead to finalize it. At present it is not possible to rule out, inter alia, a credible set of complementary sanctions, precisely in order to simplify it and avoid having a system burdened with sophisticated contrivances.

In the view of my delegation the future convention will have two main objectives that will form the basis of the international system of verification. We refer to chemical disarmament, which means the total elimination of chemical weapon stocks and of production facilities for such weapons in all States parties; and the peaceful use of the chemical industry, including prevention of the development of capabilities to produce chemical weapons. The first objective is clear and in addition will have to be achieved within 10 years. As a result I do not foresee any major legal problems in achieving it. The second objective, however, calls for discussion. For a start, there is a tendency to set aside the notion of peaceful uses in favour of "purposes not prohibited by the convention". It appears that this distinction would cause no particular problems. However, there is a risk that this concept could provide a cover for the development of an extensive sector of the chemical industry for military purposes not covered by the prohibitions of the convention. The problem would then be to know to what extent this would be compatible with the precept laid down in the preamble that advances in chemistry should be used exclusively for the benefit of mankind. The verification system which is being developed provides a systematic and coherent set of provisions directed towards ensuring the fulfilment of obligations with regard to these two objectives. This will certainly need to be refined, particularly with regard to article VI. But what must be highlighted here is its comprehensive nature in which challenge inspections or inspections on request constitute one of the key elements.

In this way I come to the central point of my statement this morning. In accordance with instructions from my Government, I have pleasure in submitting to this Conference a proposal on challenge inspections or inspections on request contained in document CD/1075 (or CD/CW/WP.337), which was circulated this morning by the secretariat in all official languages of the Conference.

(Mr. Calderón, Peru)

In submitting this proposal, Peru is convinced that it can help promote understanding on this issue. The proposals we are submitting today naturally take into account the comments made by several delegations. We have no doubt that the promising atmosphere in Geneva now with regard to the possibility of the early conclusion of the convention will do much to help resolve this thorny issue. The key point of our proposal is that challenge inspections or inspections on request should be viewed as consisting of two clearly differentiated stages. The first, of a strictly confidential nature and eminently technically oriented, within the competence of the Director-General of the Organization. And the second in which the Executive Council would play a leading role, basically of a political nature, in which inspection teams could be authorized wider access within the scope of the request made. The aim of dividing inspections on request into two stages is based on two guiding principles which, in the view of my delegation, should be unshakeable. The first principle assumes that all States parties act in good faith. In other words, there should be no room for doubting a priori, the intention of the States parties to act correctly in accordance with the commitments undertaken. And, by virtue of the second principle, there can be no discriminatory treatment among States parties. Consequently, both the State making the request and the State that has to accept the visit by the inspection team are on an equal footing until proved otherwise.

In the first stage, the request would be made known to the State in question and the Executive Council within 24 hours. The following day the Director-General would designate an inspection team which would travel immediately to the territory of the requested State to inspect the "relevant facilities" in accordance with the request made. When my delegation refers to "relevant facilities" - I wish to make a digression here - it is thinking of the English word "relevant" in its first meaning given in the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. At this stage the principles of non-discrimination and good faith would not allow for inspection "anywhere without delay", since that would amount to giving excessive credence to the request and considering the requested State a priori guilty. However, if the inspection team did not succeed in clarifying the doubts or concerns expressed in the inspection request, then the way would be open for a second stage, basically political in nature, where the Executive Council could decide to extend the mandate of the inspection team to enable it to inspect "anywhere without delay", but still within the context of the request made, in order to determine whether or not the convention had been breached. This second stage, which gives greater discretion to the inspection team in the territory of the visited country, would therefore be a measure of last resort, which could be followed by the appropriate sanction should non-compliance be proved. The principles of non-discrimination and good faith should also govern provisions to avoid any abuse of the right to inspections on request. These could include sanctions as a means of discouraging the devaluation of this valuable mechanism through abuse. We cannot imagine that, if this right was repeatedly abused, the perpetrator would be left unpunished in full knowledge of the fact that there would be a cost that would have to be paid by someone.

As I have already pointed out, an international system of verification, being a human invention, would always be limited. In principle, concealed intentions or decisions cannot be detected as long as they do not become a manifestation of a will that has not yet been implemented. Consequently, the

(Mr. Calderón, Peru)

reliability of the system will suffer from the weaknesses of what is humanly possible. However, this should not be an obstacle to our finding the highest common denominator and concluding within the proposed 12 months, with legitimate satisfaction, the convention which will ban chemical weapons from this planet for ever.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Peru, Dr. Calderón, for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. If at this stage there are no delegations wishing to take the floor, I would like to make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Soviet Union. I see none, and so I shall now turn to the statement.

The beginning of the current session of the Conference on Disarmament has been marked by an important event. On 16 May the United States delegation officially presented to the Conference on Disarmament new proposals based on the statement made by President Bush on 13 May on the prohibition of chemical weapons. President Bush's message to the Conference on Disarmament contained a commitment on the part of the United States to the early completion of work on the covention on the banning of chemical weapons. This is, of course, in line with the Soviet Union's approach to chemical disarmament. There is every justification for including elimination of the chemical weapons threat among the priority tasks facing the international community. Recent events in the Persian Gulf offered a grim reminder of this. We are deeply convinced that this weapon of mass destruction should have no place on Earth, neither in the West nor in the East, neither in the North nor in the South.

The USSR delegation welcomes the new United States initiatives in the field of banning chemical weapons as a necessary contribution to the process of preparation of a convention in this area. They contain a great potential for progress towards agreement on a number of still outstanding issues. This concerns primarily the United States' declared readiness to assume obligations under the convention to forswear the use of chemical weapons in any circumstances, including retaliation, and to destroy completely all stocks of chemical weapons and production facilities within the first 10 years after the convention enters into force. This makes it possible to believe that we will at last manage to solve two of the most important outstanding issues.

The overwhelming majority of participants in the negotiations, including the Soviet Union, have been firm proponents of the need for the unconditional and absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. This is a major contribution that the convention would make to strengthening international security. Such a ban would have a solid moral component as well. We welcome the new position of the United States on this issue, which opens up the path towards early agreement on one of the fundamental obligations of States under the future convention.

It is no secret that the participants in the negotiations gave a critical reception to the proposals which in one way or another allowed for the possibility that not all chemical weapon stocks would be destroyed. Many saw in them an element of discrimination, an attempt to perpetuate differences in the status of States with respect to chemical weapons and even a justification for acquiring chemical weapons. In spite of the fact that the well-known idea

(The President)

of maintaining 2 per cent of chemical weapon stocks until all CW-capable States become parties to the convention was motivated by the aim of ensuring the universality of the convention, it met with similar criticism. Last year the issue of universality was discussed in detail from various points of view and was recognized as a key issue for the effectiveness of the future convention. Quite a few useful alternative proposals were put forward concerning steps that could be taken as of now to facilitate accession to the convention by as many States as possible. Taking into account all the circumstances at the negotiations, the Soviet Union will of course not object to the removal from the draft convention of any reference to the Soviet-American proposal on ensuring the universality of the convention, which was based on the idea of maintaining 2 per cent of chemical weapon stocks.

The discussion of the issues related to the convention's universality has shown that declarations by States of their intention to become original parties or original signatories of the agreement now being drafted are among the major means of strengthening confidence and improving the atmosphere at the negotiations. The Soviet Union is pleased to note that in the course of today's plenary meeting we have heard further statements to that effect. The Soviet Union, initially unilaterally in 1989, then in 1990 jointly with the United States, and also jointly with the participants in the CSCE process, has officially declared its intention to sign the future convention as an original party. We consider it important that other States should follow these good examples, especially now, when the negotiations are in need of a strong and universal political support. Regional initiatives in support of the convention by relevant States are also useful.

Joining the convention does not imply only obligations, but should be naturally related to the actual benefits which would accrue to parties renouncing chemical weapons under effective international control. In this regard we consider that the inclusion in the convention of the provisions now practically agreed upon on economic cooperation and development is a useful step. The same applies to the provisions on assistance in the event of a CW attack or the threat of such an attack. The convention should encourage States to rely on international assistance, which might be provided through the organization under the convention in the event of the use of chemical weapons, which of course would be a gross violation of international law. The USSR delegation supports the setting up under the organization of a special voluntary fund for international assistance, which might take the form of both means of protection against chemical weapons and means of humanitarian assistance to victims of the use of chemical weapons. As for encouraging States to join the convention, the United States' idea that the parties should refuse to trade in CW-related materials with countries that do not join the convention within a reasonable time after its entry into force is also an interesting one. This is a relatively new issue in the negotiations, and its technical and legal aspects will of course need to be looked into further.

The draft convention already contains general provisions on cooperation among States in the destruction of chemical weapons. The declared readiness of the United States to provide practical technical help to other States in the safe and environmentally sound destruction of chemical weapons can be welcomed as a specific means of putting this provision into effect.

(The President)

The Soviet Union has a certain amount of useful experience in examining, together with the United States, issues related to cooperation in the area of destruction. The USSR delegation will be prepared to take part in the exchange of views on the United States proposal that issues of cooperation in the destruction of chemical weapons should be discussed already at the negotiating stage.

The ban on chemical weapons would be made more effective by a mechanism of sanctions against violators. Last year material on this topic was prepared for the first time for inclusion in the draft convention. We support the basic principle of this document, that every violation of the convention should give rise to an adequate reaction on the part of the international community and that measures should be taken to redress situations related to violations of the convention. A role in this area could be played both by bodies within the future organization to be set up under the convention and - where there is a threat to international peace and security - United Nations machinery, in particular the Security Council and measures under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. The idea of collective measures in response to violations of the convention, which would demonstrate the unity of the States parties to it, is also well founded. The United States' declaration in favour of strengthening sanctions against those who violate the convention, particularly where chemical weapons are used, corresponds to our approach and, as we see it, is in keeping with the prevailing views at the negotiations. Here too there is a possibility for resolving another of the issues which have not yet been fully agreed.

The ban on chemical weapons must of course be supported by the most highly effective international control. We expect nothing less from the future convention. In this context we note with satisfaction the United States' declaration of its commitment to a strong and firm verification régime. The time has come for early agreement on mandatory challenge inspections, an important element of verification. The major task here as we see it is to strike a balance between the need to ensure, on the one hand, strict compliance with the convention and confidence among all the parties that it is being complied with and, on the other, protection of sensitive information in areas not related to the purposes of the convention. In the view of the USSR delegation, this goal can be reached through a combination of the principle of mandatory challenge inspections anywhere with the idea of "managed access" advanced by Great Britain and tested in a number of trial inspections. We hope that the promised new United States proposals on inspections of undeclared facilities will be a contribution to the joint efforts of the negotiators.

It is hardly necessary to demonstrate the importance of greater openness, especially in the concluding stage of the negotiations. Appeals on that score are also contained in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Data exchange should facilitate the elaboration of the convention's provisions, including those dealing with the chemical industry. Some time ago the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany introduced a proposal (CD/828 of 12 April 1988) relating to the format of such an exchange of data on a multilateral basis during the negotiations, which comprises both a statement on the presence or absence of chemical weapons and sections related to facilities to be subject to verification. In keeping with this proposal

(The President)

most European States as well as Australia, Chile and Japan have provided information. We call on all States that have not yet provided data in keeping with the format proposed by the Federal Republic of Germany to do so in the near future.

The Soviet Union supports the idea of intensifying the negotiating process with a view to resolving all the major outstanding problems before the end of 1991. The proposal for a package solution of these problems taking into account the whole range of States' interests is also directed towards the early conclusion of the convention. Also worthy of support is the idea of setting a deadline for completing the preparation of the convention which is acceptable to all participants in the negotiations. A special meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament could provide a strong additional impetus for moving towards final agreement. The usefulness of such a meeting, if thoroughly prepared, appears to be acknowledged by virtually everyone, and we believe we should now move on to the practical organization of this important meeting, so that its results match its original intentions.

The elements are now truly falling into place for a breakthrough towards the final goal - the convention on the complete prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and the destruction of stocks. The new United States proposals will undoubtedly help to broaden areas of agreement between the negotiators. The Soviet Union is ready to cooperate constructively with all States with a view to the speediest possible advance towards a world free of chemical weapons.

I thank the distinguished delegates for the attention given to the statement I have just read as the leader of the Soviet delegation, and if no one else wishes to speak at this juncture, I should like to turn to the adoption of a few procedural decisions regarding our further work. Are there any speakers at this stage? I see that the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Chadha, is asking for the floor.

Mr. CHADHA (India): Before you go on to the procedural matters, I would like to take the floor very briefly to say how deeply touched my delegation is by the kind sentiments expressed by you, Mr. President, as well as the generous references made by the distinguished representatives of the Netherlands and Peru to the memory of the late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. It is indeed comforting to know that in the hour of our crisis, we can count on the sympathy and support of friends like you and the members of this Conference.

Rajiv Gandhi was a great son of India. He will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to the building of a strong and progressive nation; for his devotion to democratic values; and for his determination to improve the lot of the common man. He strongly believed that if India is to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, it must keep pace with the rapid changes which are taking place in every sphere of human endeavour. Thus, while he remained firmly rooted in our traditional values and culture, he also repeatedly talked of the need for us to look ahead to the twenty-first century.

(Mr. Chadha, India)

Like his illustrious mother, Indira Gandhi, and grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi will perhaps be best remembered for his passionate belief in the establishment of a new and more just international order. He worked assiduously for the attainment of this goal. You were good enough, Mr. President, to recall his contribution to the cause of disarmament, which is the central concern of this body. In the famous action plan presented to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament, he put forward a blueprint - in a time-bound framework - to rid this planet of the scourge of nuclear weapons. He joined with five other world leaders in the Six-Nation Initiative on disarmament. The ideas incorporated in both these initiatives remain as valid today as they were then and will, I hope, continue to inspire us in the important task in which we are engaged.

India has faced many crises but the people of India have shown on every occasion that they have the necessary resilience to overcome them and to forge ahead on the path of progress. I am sure that they will not be found wanting on this occasion also.

I shall not fail to transmit to my authorities and to the bereaved family the kind words of sympathy expressed here this morning on your behalf and on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador Chadha for his statement and once again I should like to stress that in the person of Rajiv Gandhi the Indian people and all mankind have lost a great figure. We all feel solidarity with India and the Indian people and we are certain that the great Indian people will find within itself the strength to overcome all the difficulties it encounters in its path. Once again please accept our most sincere condolences.

I would now like to turn to the issue of the progress report of the thirty-first session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. It is contained in document CD/1065. In this connection I put before the Conference for adoption the recommendation contained in paragraph 15 that the next session of this Ad Hoc Group should be convened from 29 July to 9 August this year. I see no objections to the adoption of this recommendation, and therefore I take it that the Conference adopts it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Allow me now to turn to the timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies to be held next week. I understand that the secretariat has circulated an informal paper to this effect, and I should like to remind you that as usual the timetable is indicative and if need be we can change it. On this understanding, if I see no objections I propose that we now adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I have no further special issues for discussion at today's meeting. As you know, this is the last plenary meeting under my presidency, and hence I should like to say literally a couple of words. I do not intend to make a lengthy statement or to make any wise pronouncements. I simply wish to report to you briefly on the basic aspects of the work of the Conference over the period that has elapsed. I think that our work proceeded normally, in a businesslike spirit. We have succeeded in solving one procedural issue which for some time remained outstanding - the dates for the next session of the Group of Seismic Experts; we have just settled that. In my capacity as President I continued consultations on the issue of the membership of the Conference; here new proposals, new ideas were submitted, but unfortunately I am unable to announce any fundamental progress. I shall just say that to all appearances these consultations will be continued, but no longer by me. The secretariat of the United Nations Office at Geneva was also approached regarding the parking of cars by delegations taking part in the work of the Conference.

Substantial changes for the better in the chemical weapons negotiations have opened up new prospects before the whole of the Conference. I think that bearing this in mind we must take a fresh look at the organization of our work and think how best to adapt it to the changed circumstances. I shall continue consultations on this issue as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and I shall act here in close contact with Ambassador Solesby, who from next week on will be in the place I am occupying now.

In conclusion, I thank you for your active and fruitful cooperation and understanding. I should also like to express my gratitude to the staff of the United Nations secretariat, especially Mr. Komatina and Mr. Berasategui for the - I must say - very courteous attention that they manifested towards the work of the Conference as a whole and towards me personally. I should also like to express my gratitude to other secretariat staff aside from the disarmament staff, and in particular the interpreters and translators, among them the translators in the Russian Section, who gave me valuable support. And finally, with all my heart, I would like to wish every success to my successor in this post, Ambassador Solesby, to congratulate her on taking up her duties next week and to express my confidence that, thanks to her excellent professional and personal qualities, she will successfully guide the work of the Conference and achieve greater success than I managed to achieve.

On this note my concluding statement ends, and before adjourning this plenary meeting I should like to remind you that, as agreed in the timetable for this week, immediately following this plenary meeting, literally in three to five minutes' time, we will be holding an informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 3. The next official plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 30 May at 10 a.m. And now I intend to adjourn this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.